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POETRY.

TO A DEPARTED SPIRIT.

BY MRS. HERMAN.

From the bright stars, or from the viewless air,
Or from some world unreach'd by human thought,
Spirit, sweet spirit! if thy home be there,
And if thy vision with the past be fraught,
Answer me, answer me!

Have we not communed here, of life and death!
Have we not said that love, such love as ours,
Was not to perish, as a rose's breath,
To melt away, like song from festal hours?
Answer, oh! answer me!

Thine eye's last light was mine—the soul that shone
Intensely, mournfully, through gathering haze!
Darest thou bear with thee, to the silent unknown,
Nought of what lived in that long, earnest gaze?
Hear, hear, and answer me!

The voice—its low, soft, fervent, farewell tone
Thrilled through the temple of the parting strife,
Like a faint breeze—oh! from that music down
Send back one sound, if love's he quenches life!
But once, oh! answer me!

In the still noontide, in the sunset's hush,
In the dead hour of night, when thought grows
deeper;

When the heart's phantoms from the darkness rush,
Fearfully beautiful, to strive with sleep;
Spirit! then answer me!

By the remembrance of our blended prayer:
By all our tears, whose mingling made them
sweet;

By our last hopes, the victor o'er despair!
Speak!—if our souls in deathless realms meet,
Answer me, answer me!

The grave is silent—and the fire-off sky,
And the deep midnight's—silent all, and lone!
Oh! if the buried love make no reply,
What voice has earth? Hear, pity, speak! mine
own!

Answer me, answer me!

DE LINDSAY.

(BY E. L. BELFLORE, Esq.)

"Man walketh in a vain shadow; and disquieteth
himself in vain."

[Concluded.]

To return to Mary. The letters which had blessed her through the liveliest days suddenly ceased. What could be the reason?—was she faithless—forgetful—ill? Alas! whatever might be the cause, it was almost equally ominous to her. "Are you sure there are none?" she said, every morning, when she inquired at the office, from which she once used to depart so gaily; and the tone of that voice was so mournful, that the gruff post-man paused to look again, before he shut the lattice and extinguished the last hope. Her appetite and colour daily decreased; and shut up in her humble and fireless chamber, she passed whole hours in tears, in reading and repeating, again and again, every syllable of the letters she already possessed, or in pouring forth in letters to him, all the love and bitterness of her soul. "He must be ill," she said at last; "he never else could have been so cruel!" and she could bear the idea no longer. "I will go to him—I will soothe and attend him—who can love him, who can watch over him like me?" and the kindness of her nature overcame its modesty, and she made her small bundle, and stole early one morning from the house. "If he should despise me," she thought; and she was almost about to return, when the stern voice of her brother came upon her ear. He had for several days watched the alteration in her habits and manners, and endeavoured to guess at the cause. He went into her room, discovered a letter in her desk which she had just written to Rupert, and which spoke of her desire. He watched, discovered, and saved her. There was no mercy or gentleness in the bosom of Mr. James Warner. He carried her home; reviled her in the coarsest and most taunting language; acquainted her father;

and after seeing her debarr'd from all access to correspondence or escape, after exulting over her unbraiding and heart-broken shame and despair, and sweating that it was vastly theatrical, Mr. James Warner mounted his yellow Stunhope, and went his way to the Yves Court. But these were tiring misfortunes, compared with those which awaited this unfortunate girl.

There lived in the village of T—— one Zacharias Johnson, a jolly man and a rich, moreover a saint of the same chapter as Ebenezer Epimam Warner; his voice was the sweet nasal, smouldering forth the most unromantic aspect the most sinister, and his vestments the most threadbare of the whole of that sacred tribe. To the eyes of this man there was something comely in the person of Mary Warner: He liked her beauty, for he was a sensualist; her gentleness, for he was a coward; and her money, for he was a merchant. He proposed both to the father and to the son; the daughter he looked upon as a concluding blessing sure to follow the precious assent of the two relations. To the father he spoke of goldness and stripes, of the delightfulness of living in duty, and the receipts of his flourishing country house; to the son he spoke the language of kindness and the world—he knew that young man had exp. as—he should feel too happy to furnish Mr. James with something for his innocent amusements, if he might hope for his (Mr. James's) influence over his worthy father: the sum was specified and the consent was sold. Among those domestic phenomena, which the inquirer seldom takes the trouble to solve, is the magical power possessed by a junior branch of the family over the main tree, in spite of the contrary and perverse direction taken by the aforesaid branch. James had acquired and exercised a most undue authority over the paternal patriarchy, although in the habits and sentiments of each there was not one single trait in common between them. But James possessed a virtuous and unshakable, his father a weak and piston-ridden mind. In domestic life, it is the mind which is the master. Mr. Zacharias Johnson had once or twice, even before Mary's acquaintance with Rupert, urged his suit to Ebenezer; but as the least hint of such a circumstance to Mary seemed to occasion her a pang which went to the ready kind heart of the old man, as his he was fond of her society, and had no wish to lose it, and as, above all, Mr. James had not yet held those conferences with Zacharias which ended in the alliance of their interests,—the proposal seemed to Mr. Warner like a lawsuit to the Lord Chancellor, something rather to be talked about than to be decided. Unfortunately, about the very same time in which Mary's proposed escape had drawn upon her the paternal indignation, Zacharias had made a convert of the son; James took advantage of his opportunity, worked upon his father's anger, grief, mercantile love of lucre, and saint-like affection to sect, and obtained from Ebenezer a promise to enforce the marriage—backed up his receding scruples, preserved his courage through the scenes with his weeping and wretched daughter, and, in spite of every lingering sentiment of tenderness and pity, saw the very day fixed which was to leave his sister helpless for ever.

It is painful to go through that series of inhuman persecutions, so common in domestic records; that system which, like all grounded upon injustice, is as foolish as tyrannical, and which always ends in misery, as it begins in oppression. Mary was too gentle to resist; her prayers became stilled; her tears ceased to flow; she sat alone in her helpless, hopeless brokenness of heart, in that deep despair which, like the incense of an evil dream, weighs upon the bosom, a burden and a torture from which there is no escape nor relief. She managed at last, within three days of that fixed for her union, to write to Rupert, and get her letter conveyed to the post.

"Save me," it said in conclusion—"I ask not by what means, I care not for what end, save me, I implore you, my guardian angel. I shall not trouble you long—I write to you no

romantic appeal!—God knows that I have little thought for romance, but I feel that I shall soon see, only let me die unseparated from you—your, who first taught me to live, be near me, teach me to die, take away from me the bitterness of death. Of all the terrors of the fate to which they compel me, nothing appears so dreadful as the idea that I may then no longer think of you and love you. My hand is so cold that I can scarcely hold my pen, but my head is on fire. I think I could go mad if I would—but I will not, for then you could no longer love me. I hear my father's step—oh, Rupert!—on Friday next—remember—save me, save me!"

But the day, the fatal Friday arrived Rupert came too. They arrayed her in the bridal garb, and her father came up stairs to summon her to the room, in which the few guests invited were already assembled. He kissed her cheek; it was so deathly pale, that his heart smote him, and he spoke in her in the language of other days. She turned towards him, her lips moved, but she spoke not. "My child, my child!" said the old man, "have you not one word for your father?"—"It is too late!" she said; "can you not preserve me yet?" There was reticence in the father's eye, but at that moment James stood before him. His keen mind saw the danger; he frowned at his father's opportunity was past. "God forgive you!" said Mary, and cold, and trembling, and scarcely alive, she descended to the small and dark room, which was nevertheless the state chamber of the house. At a small table of black mahogany, plain and stately, starchy and unwholesome within and without, withered and fossilized at heart by the bigotry and solidness, and aged of sixty years, sat two maiden saints; they came forward, kissed the unshining cheek of the bride, and then, with one word of blessing, returned to their former seats and resumed their former posture. There was no little appearance of life in the persons of the two, and it was something ghastly and supernatural—as if you had witnessed the salute of the grave. The bridegroom sat at one corner of the dim fireplace, arrayed in a more gaudy attire than was usual with the sect, and which gave a grotesque and unnatural gaiety to his lengthy figure and solemn aspect. As the bride entered the room, there was a faint smile on his lip, and a twinkle in his half-shut and crossing eyes, and a hasty shuffle in his unwieldy limbs, as he slowly rose, pulled down his yellow waistcoat, made a stately genuflection, and regained his seat. Opposite to him sat a little lankhaired boy, about twelve years old, munching a piece of cake, and looking with a subdued and spiritless glance over the whole group, till at length his attention riveted on a large dull-coloured cat sleeping on the hearth, and whom he dust not awaken even by a murmured ejaculation of "Puss?"

On the window-seat, at the farther end of the room, there sat, with folded arms and abstracted air, a tall military-looking figure, apparently about forty. He rose, bowed low to Mary, gazed at her for some moments with a look of deep interest, sighed, muttered something to himself, and remained motionless with eyes fixed upon the ground, and leaning against the dark waistcoat. This was Monkton, the husband of the woman who had allured her father to T——, and from whom he had heard so threatening an account of her liege lord. Monkton had long known Zacharias, and always inclined to a serious turn of mind, he had lately endeavoured to derive consolation from the doctrines of that enthusiast. On hearing from Zacharias, for the saint had no false notions of delicacy, that he was going to bring into the pale of matrimony a lumb which had almost fallen a prey to the same wolf that had invaded his own fold, Monkton expressed so warm an interest, and so earnest a desire to see the reclaimed one, that Zacharias had invited him to partake of the bridal cheer.

Such was the conclave—and never was a wedding party more ominous in its appearance. "We will have," said the father, and

his voice trembled, "one drop of spiritual comfort before we repair to the house of God. James, reach me the holy book." The Bible was brought, and all, as by mechanical impulse, sank upon their knees. The old man read with deep feeling some portions of the Scriptures calculated for the day; there was a lushed and heartfelt silence; he rose—he began an extemporaneous and fervent discourse. How earnest and breathless was the attention of his listeners! the very boy sat with open mouth and thirsting ear. "Oh, beneficent Father," he said, as he drew near to his conclusion, "we do indeed bow before thee with humbled and smitten hearts. The evil spirit hath been among us, and one who was the wise and the just, and the delight of our eyes, hath forgotten thee for awhile; but shall she not return unto thee, and shall we not be happy once more? Oh, melt away the hardness of that bosom which rejects thee and thy chosen for strange idols, and let the waters of thy grace flow from the softened rock. And now, O Father, let thy mercy and healing hand be upon thy servant (and the old man looked to Monkton), upon whom the sun's bright hath fallen, and whose people the same serpent hath destroyed." Here Monkton's soul was uplifted. "Give unto him the comforts of the holy spirit; recall him from the sin and worldly delusions of his earlier days, and both unto him and her who is now about to enter upon a new career of duty, vouchsafe that peace which no vanity of earth can take away. From evil let good arise; and though the voice of gladness be mute, and though the sounds of bridal rejoicing are not heard within our walls, yet grant that this day may be the beginning of a new life, devoted unto happiness, to virtue, and to thee!" There was a long pause; they re-awaken the old woman was affected. Monkton returned to the window, and throwing it open, leaned forward as for breath. Mary resumed her seat, and the she sat motionless and speechless. Alas! her very heart seemed to have stilled its beating. An length James said (and his voice, though it was softened almost to a whisper, arose upon that deep silence as an unlooked-for and unnatural interruption), "James, father, it must be time to go, and the cartages must be strictly coming, and here they are—no, that sounds like four horses." And at that very moment the rapid trampling of hoofs, and the hurried rattling of wheels were heard—the sounds ceased at the gate of the house. The whole party, even Mary, rose and looked at each other—a slight noise was heard in the hall—a swift step upon the stairs—the door was flung open, so wan and emaciated that he would scarcely have been known but by the eyes of attention, Rupert de Lindsay burst into the room. "Thank God," he cried, "I am not too late!" and, in mingled fondness and defiance, he threw his arm round the slender form which clung to it all wild and tremblingly. He looked round. "Old man," he said, "I have done you wrong; I will repay it; give me your daughter as my wife. What are the claims of her intended husband to mine? Is he rich?—my riches trouble his! Does he love her?—I swear that I love her more! Does she love him? I love, old man, are these cheeks, whose roses you have marred, this pining and wasted form, which shrinks now at the very mention of his name, tokens of her love? Does she love me? You her father, you her brother, you her lover—yes, all, every one among you know that she does, and may Heaven forsake me if I do not deserve her love!—give her to me as my wife—she is mine already in the sight of God. Do not dicker us— we both implore you upon our knees!" "Avaunt, blasphemer!" cried Zacharias. "Begone!" said the father—the old ladies looked at him as if they were going to treat him as Cleopatra did the pearl, and dissolve him in vinegar. "Wretch!" muttered in a deep and subdued tone, the enraged and agitated Monkton, who, the moment Rupert had entered the room, had guessed who he was, and stood frowning by the sideboard, and handling, as if involuntarily, the knife which had cut the boy's cake, and been left accidentally there. And the stern brother coming towards